

RESPONSE AND AMENDMENT

Serial Number: 09/654,025

Filing Date: September 1, 2000

Title: VIDEO GAMING SYSTEM WITH WILD CARD SYSTEM AND BONUS SYSTEM

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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated below.

1. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method of playing a video wagering game, comprising:

a player placing a wager on a reel-slot-type video game event having a plurality of symbol positions; displaying a plurality of randomly selected game symbols on a display, each symbol appearing in a designated symbol position;

upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event, randomly selecting between zero and fewer than a maximum number of viewable symbol positions as a wild symbol position;

converting each symbol displayed within each selected wild symbol position to a wild symbol; and

determining game outcomes based on the displayed game symbols and wild symbols in a single game event.

2. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein the conversion of each symbol within each wild symbol position takes place one at a time.

3. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein between one and one less than all available symbol positions are selected as wild symbol positions.

4. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein each wild symbol is identical.

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5. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein each wild symbol morphs into a game symbol prior, after to or during the step of determining game outcomes.
6. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein each wild symbol is wild as to all game symbols.
7. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of awarding a prize for winning outcomes.
8. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 7, wherein the winning outcomes are awarded according to a look up table.
9. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein the triggering event is the appearance of two wild symbols, and wherein at least one wild symbol position is converted to a wild symbol with the same appearance as the wild symbols that triggered the bonus event.
10. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein the triggering symbol or combination of symbols comprises a symbol on both a first and fifth reel in a scatter arrangement.
11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The method of claim 1, A method of playing a video wagering game, comprising:~~
a player placing a wager on a reel-slot-type video game event having a plurality of symbol positions; displaying a plurality of randomly selected game symbols on a display, each symbol appearing in a designated symbol position;

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upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event, randomly selecting between zero and fewer than a maximum number of viewable symbol positions as a wild symbol position;

converting each symbol displayed within each selected wild symbol position to a wild symbol; and

determining game outcomes based on the displayed game symbols and wild symbols in a single game event.

wherein symbol positions bearing game symbols that produce scatter pays are excluded from the random selection of wild symbol positions.

12. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method of playing a video wagering game, comprising:

a player placing a wager on a reel-slot-type video game;

displaying a plurality of randomly selected game symbols on a display, each symbol appearing in a designated symbol position;

upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event, randomly selecting at least one, and fewer than all symbol positions as [a] wild symbol positions;

converting each symbol displayed within each selected wild symbol position to a wild symbol;

retaining wild symbols in their respective positions and randomly distributing at least some non-wild symbols into frames in the display to perform a second gaming event; and

determining game outcomes based on predetermined combinations of the displayed game symbols and wild symbols in the second gaming event.

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13. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) An apparatus for playing a video wagering game comprising a housing, a memory system, and a monitor, the memory system directing a process comprising, not necessarily in sequence:

- a) accepting a wager on a reel-slot-type video game;
- b) displaying a plurality of randomly selected game symbols on a display, each symbol appearing in a designated symbol position;
- c) upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event, randomly selecting at least one but fewer than all symbol positions as wild symbol positions
- d) converting each symbol displayed within each selected wild symbol position to a wild symbol; and
- e) determining game outcomes based on the displayed game symbols and wild symbols within a single game event.

14. (ORIGINAL) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein after step b) and before step d), a game using the randomly selected game symbols on a display is resolved.

15. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) A method of playing a video wagering game with a bonus feature, comprising:

- a player placing a wager on a reel-slot-type video game having a plurality of symbol positions;
- displaying a plurality of randomly selected game symbols on a display, each symbol appearing in a designated symbol position;
- addressing any winning events by a procedure selected from the group consisting of a) resolving any winning events, b) carrying any winning events forward for later resolving, and c) carrying any winning events forward for modification of the winning event by a bonus play;

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upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event for a bonus event, randomly selecting at least one and fewer than all of said plurality of symbol positions as a wild symbol position;

converting each symbol displayed within each selected wild symbol position to a wild symbol; and

determining a bonus outcome based on the displayed game symbols and wild symbols within the gaming event.

16. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 15 wherein any winning event from displaying a plurality of randomly selected game symbols on a display are resolved before determining a bonus outcome based on the displayed game symbols and wild symbols.

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17. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 15 wherein any winning event from displaying a plurality of randomly selected game symbols on a display are resolved after determining a bonus outcome based on the displayed game symbols and wild symbols.

18. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 15 wherein any winning event from displaying a plurality of randomly selected game symbols on a display are resolved at about the same time as determining a bonus outcome based on the displayed game symbols and wild symbols.

19. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein the maximum number of viewable positions is 15.

20. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein an appearance of the wild symbol changes to another game symbol at or before game outcomes are determined.

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21. (ORIGINAL) The method of claim 1, wherein the wild symbols are wild as to fewer than all of the game symbols.

22. (NEW) A method of playing a video wagering game, comprising:

01 a player placing a wager on a reel-slot-type video game event having a plurality of symbol positions; displaying a plurality of randomly selected game symbols on a display, each symbol appearing in a designated symbol position;

upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event in a base game, after displaying symbols in the designated symbol positions, randomly selecting in a bonus event between zero and fewer than a maximum number of viewable symbol positions as a wild symbol position;

converting each symbol displayed within each selected wild symbol position to a wild symbol; and

determining game outcomes based on the displayed game symbols and wild symbols in a single game event.

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SUMMARY OF THE GROUNDS OF REJECTIONS

- 1) Claims 1-9, 12-18 and 20-21 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by O'Halloran (U.S. Patent No. 6,439,993).
- 2) Claims 10 and 19 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over O'Halloran alone.
- 3) Claim 11 has been indicated as allowable if placed into independent form, with all of the limitations of the claims from which it depends.

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RESPONSE AND COMMENTS ON THE REJECTIONS

1) Claims 1-9, 12-18 and 20-21 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as anticipated by O'Halloran (U.S. Patent No. 6,439,993).

It is first desirable to show a direct, side-by-side comparison of the subject matter of claim 1 as compared to the disclosure of the O'Halloran reference. This is done in the table below:

Claim 1 of PA0463apUS	O'HALLORAN	COMMENTS
1. A method of playing a video wagering game, comprising:	Column 1, lines 31-35.	
a player placing a wager on a reel-slot-type video game event having a plurality of symbol positions;	Column 2, lines 32-43.	Placing a wager is implied, although not specifically stated.
displaying a plurality of randomly selected game symbols on a display, each symbol appearing in a designated symbol position;	Column 2, lines 32-43.	
upon the occurrence of a predetermined triggering event, randomly selecting between zero and fewer than a maximum number of viewable symbol positions as a wild symbol position;	"The symbols 22 can include a trigger wild card symbol 30, in this case the "@" symbol. A wild card symbol 30 is a symbol that can be substituted with any other symbol 22 to produce a prize winning combination."	Column 2, lines 54-59. There is no "triggering event" in O'Halloran. Wild symbols are immediately displayed.
converting each symbol displayed within each	Column 2, lines 54-59.	There is a difference here. O'Hall ran

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selected wild symbol position to a wild symbol; and		immediately provides the Wild Symbol, rather than subsequently converting the position to a Wild symbol.
determining game outcomes based on the displayed game symbols and wild symbols in a single game event.	Column 2, lines 54-59	

It is clear from this comparison that O'Halloran does not teach the invention as claimed and cannot provide the substantive basis for a rejection under 35 USC 102(e). The rejection is clearly in error and must be withdrawn. O'Halloran does not teach a play of a base game, a display of a special event, and the special event triggering a subsequent event wherein viewable symbol positions are randomly selected as wild symbol positions. This process is not taught by O'Halloran, as clearly shown in the comparison in the table. The rejection is in error and must be withdrawn.

The same or equivalent limitations appear in claims 12, 13 and 15, and those claims are likewise patentable as novel over the O'Halloran reference. New claim 22 also contains similar limitations and also specifically recites that the Wild symbol selection occurs in a bonus event after a base game.

2) Claims 10 and 19 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over O'Halloran alone.

As O'Halloran completely fails in its teachings of the limitations of claim 1, from which these claims ultimately depend, these claims also cannot be shown to be obvious over O'Halloran. There is nothing asserted in O'Halloran to teach the limitations that are not shown in claim 1, so the rejection must fail.

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3) Claim 11 has been indicated as allowable if placed into independent form, with all of the limitations of the claims from which it depends.

Claim 11 has been placed into independent form and is patentable.